NPA’S OPTIONS
COUNSELING AND
ENROLLMENT TOOLKIT

Strategies for Using with State Agencies
Why Options Counseling?

- Options counseling is the process by which the dually-eligible explore options for obtaining long-term services and supports (LTSS).
- As States develop new care models for their dually-eligible (such as Managed Long Term Care, Medicaid Managed Care and financial alignment demonstrations), it is critical that individuals can access a robust options counseling system to help them navigate their options. If individuals don’t learn about PACE, how will they find us?
- Likewise, if enrollment policies aren’t well crafted, they could cut off access to PACE.
What is Quality Options Counseling?

- In order to be effective, options counseling needs to be:
  - Comprehensive (includes the whole range of available services)
  - Competent (provided by individuals who are knowledgeable)
  - Conflict-free (so that options counselors do not offer services that might cloud their objectivity)
  - Continuous and timely (so that individuals receive information as their needs and circumstances change)
The Model Options Counseling Policy

- NPA crafted a model options counseling policy for members to use with their state officials to help them craft comprehensive, fair options counseling processes that don’t unintentionally disadvantage PACE (or any other provider of care)
- The policy is modeled after existing state options counseling policies, the Administration on Community Living’s Draft National Standards for options counseling, and other sources
- The materials in this toolkit also touch on related topics such as enrollment policies and ombudsmen
USING THIS TOOLKIT
Identify the Players

• To start, learn whether and how your state offers options counseling. Similarly, familiarize yourself with any proposed enrollment strategies (passive enrollment, intelligent assignment, etc.)

• Identify the state administering agency (SAA), any contractors (frequently AAAs or ADRCs), and other stakeholders
Assess the Situation

- Assess the quality of the existing options counseling and enrollment policies (if they exist). Ask the following questions:
  - Can consumers access comprehensive options counseling?
  - Are options counselors and enrollment brokers trained and knowledgeable about the full range of services such as PACE?
  - Are options counseling entities and enrollment brokers unbiased and free of conflicts?
  - Can consumers receive timely or ongoing options counseling?
  - Can consumers directly enroll in PACE? Can they be passively enrolled?
  - Does your state evaluate options counseling to ensure it’s a fair and robust system?
Identify Gaps and Offer Solutions

• After you’ve identified areas for change/improvement in your states’ options counseling and enrollment system, use the policy toolkit to suggest changes to SAAs. The policy can be adapted for states to include in:
  o Memoranda of Understanding that SAAs are signing with CMS on financial alignment demonstration
  o Contracts with AAAs and other entities that offer options counseling or enrollment brokering for a state
  o Medicaid Managed Care and Managed LTSS policies

• A template letter and sample policy is provided, but can be modified as needed depending on the circumstances in your state
Identify Stakeholders/Allies

• Discuss your goals/objectives with other organizations, such as consumer organizations, other provider organizations, or even health plans. The recommendations included in our toolkit aren’t just good for PACE – they’re good for all stakeholders.
• Working with collaborators, advocate that the SAA adopt and implement a fair options counseling and enrollment policy.
Common Advocacy Techniques

- Mail the sample policy to SAAs
- Arrange a meeting with SAA officials
- Coordinate with other stakeholders (consumer groups, peer organizations)
- Employ grassroots campaigns (e.g., have consumers write letters/make calls)
- Use the media (letters to the editor, op-eds, social media)
- Engage legislators and other politicians
Additional Questions?

• Contact NPA Staff for help with policy questions, strategy development, ideas from the field, and anything else you might need.
  - [Liz Parry](mailto:Liz.Parry@npafox.org), Senior Director, State Policy (703-535-1521)